

VZCZCXYZ0001
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPG #0358 0941346
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 041346Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8844
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 0103
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0091

UNCLAS PRAGUE 000358

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

EUR/NCE FOR ERIC FICHTE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [CU](#) [EZ](#)
SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC: CUBA ROUND-UP

REF: A. 06 PRAGUE 0066
[1](#)B. 06 PRAGUE 0085
[1](#)C. PRAGUE 350
[1](#)D. PRAGUE 351

[1](#)1. (U) The following is a summary of Czech MFA and NGO activities focused on promoting human rights and democracy in Cuba.

ICDC Conference on Cuba in Berlin April 24-26

[1](#)2. (SBU) Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg will speak at the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba (ICDC) Conference in Berlin on April 26. (ICDC is a Czech NGO founded by former Czech President Vaclav Havel.) The goal of the conference is to inspire the Germany presidency to focus on Cuba, and more generally, to build support within the EU for a mid-term policy on Cuba. The conference has attracted official speakers from Germany, other EU member states, and the United States. Former President Havel, other former world leaders (such as former President of Poland Aleksandr Kwasniewski, former President of Chili Ricardo Lagos, former President of Albania Rexhep Meidani, and former Prime Minister of Estonia Mart Laar), and Cuban democracy advocates will also speak.

MFA Transition Cooperation Unit Funds New Cuba Projects

[1](#)3. (SBU) MFA Director of the Transformation Cooperation Unit (TRANS) Gabriela Dlouha said funding for Czech NGOs working to promote democracy and human rights in Cuba will slightly increase in 2007, and continue to increase annually through [1](#)2009.

[1](#)4. (SBU) In addition to providing traditional support for the democratic opposition (ref A), TRANS is also seeking ways to reach out to ordinary Cubans. For example, this year TRANS will fund a film project in Cuba similar to a successful film project TRANS funded in Burma in 2005 (ref B). In the case of the Burma project, the GOB officially authorized a Czech filmmaker to conduct a documentary-making seminar in Burma with a small group of young Burmese. The participants produced documentaries on apolitical topics, and in the process learned about the art and philosophy of documentary films. The participants were permitted to keep their cameras and equipment at the conclusion of the project. At the time, Dlouha said she hoped that small, untraditional projects like this would serve as a catalyst to encourage self-expression, journalism, and possibly change, in oppressed countries.

15. (SBU) If supplemental funds become available, TRANS plans to fund additional projects in Cuba focused on humanitarian assistance.

PIN & Czech Politicians Protest Cuban Human Rights Abuses

16. (U) Czech NGO People in Need (PIN) hosted its fourth annual protest against the Castro regime. Each year, PIN places a symbolic jail cell in Wenceslas Square on the anniversary of Castro's crackdown on Cuban dissidents in March 2003. Czech Deputy Prime Minister Alexandr (Sasha) Vondra and other prominent figures wore striped prison clothes and called for the release of all political prisoners in Cuba. Later, PIN staged a march in support of the Women in White, the wives and mothers of jailed political prisoners.

For photographs, see www.clovekvtisni.cz/index2en.php?parent=404&sid=404&id=522&idGallery=53.

MFA Director of Americas Department Moving On

17. (SBU) MFA Director of the Department of Americas Jakub Skalnik will become the DCM at the Czech mission in the Hague in summer 2007. He does not know yet who will replace him. An MFA official told Poloff unofficially on March 29 that the top candidate for the position is the former Czech Ambassador to Mexico Vladimir Eisenbruk.
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